



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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For Immediate Release
August 24, 2005

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Clean Waters Program holds first meeting

BATON ROUGE – The Louisiana Clean Waters Program held its kickoff meeting Wednesday at the Department of Environmental Quality headquarters. Speakers from several state and federal agencies made presentations on topics that influence the state's surface waters.

The meeting set the stage for how the Louisiana Clean Waters Project will meet the goals announced by Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco at DEQ in October, 2004. Currently, 310 waterbodies are considered polluted for fish and wildlife. DEQ's goal is to have 77 of these clean enough to support healthy fish and wildlife populations. Also, 28 of the 111 waterbodies that fail to meet swimming standards must be able to meet those standards. The deadline is 2012.

Speakers from DEQ, LSU Agriculture Extension Service and EPA discussed topics that can have a positive impact on the state's water quality. These included what makes a waterbody impaired, new techniques to lessen the effects of agriculture on surface water and decentralized sewage management.

"This is an outcome-based program," DEQ Secretary Mike McDaniel said. "State, federal and local governments, as well as many other entities are working toward a goal of cleaner surface water. What we want to do is have everyone working together in an effort to meet the governor's goals."

Surface water is water that is above ground, like lakes, rivers, ponds and run off. Surface water pollution can result from a number of sources, including dredging, stormwater runoff, ocean dumping and wastewater discharges.

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